

# User-Centered Access: Planning and Implementing a Fine-Free Policy

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“We do not like fines. We would always rather have our book (or DVD or other item) than your money. “

- Borrowing Policies, The College of Idaho

## Wyndham Robertson Library Mission

Mission: The Wyndham Robertson Library fosters student success at Hollins University by teaching students to critically engage in the discovery and use of information; by connecting faculty and students with resources that advance scholarship and creative work; by strengthening the intellectual community; and by preserving and sharing Hollins' legacy.





“The notion of librarians as punitive avengers, be it for enforcing silence or demanding payback for overdue items, is commonly held and has been widely caricatured.”

- Marianne Ryan, Associate University Librarian for User Service Strategies, Northwestern University





“I asked staff if they really felt good about telling a kid they weren’t allowed to check out a book because they owed a fine. I asked them if they enjoyed arguing with people over ten cents when those people were not going to follow the rules no matter what... I’d rather focus on the 99% of responsible patrons.”

- Anne Lowery, Director of New London Public Library



## Arguments as to why we should fine our patrons:

1. Efficient circulation of materials - in order to keep things moving, we need stuff back in a timely manner.
2. Community responsibility: a late loan harms the community, therefore the wrongdoer must be punished.
3. The money: libraries need fines to balance their budget.



“Overdue fines are a regressive method of raising revenue, they hurt the most those who can afford them the least, create stress-filled interactions, and require significant amounts of staff time to manage.”

- David J. Seleb, Executive Director of Oak Park Public Library





“Trust is important because its presence or absence can have a bearing on what we chose to do.”

- Partha Dasgupta, Professor Emeritus of Economics, Cambridge University



What approaches to going fine-free work? Some studies suggest:

Longer lending periods.

More frequent communication. Yes, spam lots of notices work!

Billing for replacement when ILS matures item to lost, and blocking account until matter is resolved.



**KEEP  
CALM**

**AND**

**TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT  
WHAT YOU REALLY REALLY WANT**

# How To Tell What We Really Want

- Mission correlation
- Effects
  - People
  - Finances
- Timeline for Implementation
- Examples of Success
- Positive Feedback from Stakeholders

“When the due date comes up for an item and we can't renew it, we have to keep it past the due date despite the fines because we need it desperately ...It would help significantly if students could check out library materials without worrying about the burden of library fines which can add up and becomes one more debt that we have to pay.”

- Tena Gilleard, Library Student Advisory Board

Research - Summer 2015

Proposal - Fall 2015

Conversations with partner library  
- Winter 2015

Planning - Spring 2016

Implementation, testing, training  
- Summer 2016

# Compare Policies, Then Plot Changes

Patrons	HU Books Loan Period	Fine	RC Books Loan Period	Fine	HU Video Loan Period	Fine	RC Video Loan Period	Fine	RC Magazine Loan Period	Fine
HU UndGrad	120+1R	N	120+1R	N	7+1R	N	7+1R	N		N
RC UndGrad	120+1R	N	120+1R	Y	7+1R	N	7+1R	Y		Y
HU Grad	120+2R	N	120+1R	N	7+1R	N	7+1R	N		N
HU FacStaff	120+8R	N	120+1R	N	7+1R	N	7+1R	N		N
RC FacStaff	120+8R	N	120+1R	N	7+1R	N	7+1R	N		N

# Outreach To Staff



Source: My Safety Sign, 2017



# Outreach To The Campus Community

- Before, during, after
- Audience-specific (“Here’s What’s In It For You...”)
- Simple & short, with link to more
- Contact information, with name
- Other university channels

# FINE FREE PILOT PROJECT

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT WE ARE DOING

Wyndham Robertson Library is conducting a pilot project to test a new model for library use:

- Undergraduate students can check out books for an entire semester (**120 days**).
- There will be **no daily overdue fines** for books or films.
- The undergraduate checkout limit will be 50 total books and/or films.
- You will receive regular emails to remind you of what you have checked out from the library. (See “Notices”.)

*Personally, as a senior who is working on a year-long thesis, I am absolutely in favor of extending checkout periods to the whole semester. Even in classes outside of my thesis it is extremely common for professors to assign semester-long research projects. – Lauren Earley '16  
Library Student Advisory Board.*

# Implementation: Configuration

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“By definition, the concept of ‘not’ doing something is passive, but there are behind-the-scenes procedures in our inaction.”

- Wood & Almeida, 2017

# DON'T TOUCH THE LOAN RULES

Text Second OdueR: 63 27  
Text Third OdueR: 0 27  
Text Fourth OdueR: 0 44  
Text Fifth OdueR: 0 17  
Courtesy Notice Text Number: 79  
Number Of Days Before Odue: 3  
Time 1ST Odue Recall: ~~15~~ 18 1  
Text Recall Notice: 52 18  
Text Pickup Notice: 51 6  
Text Cancel Pickup: 40 7  
Grace Period For Fines: 3  
Number Of D/HR 1st F Per: ~~1~~ 29  
Amount Of Fine 1st F Per: 1.00 0  
Number Of D/HR 2nd F Per: 0  
Amount Of Fine 2ND F Per: 0.00  
Limit Fine To Price: n  
Default Item Cost: ~~40.00~~ 50.00  
Replace Process Fee: ~~10.00~~ 15.00  
Replace Bll Service Charge: ~~15.00~~  
Rental Fee: 0.00  
Fine Incr If Recall: ~~3.00~~ 1.00  
Msg Fines: 5 42  
Msg Bill: 37 17

9 checked out notice  
10 RC-stu & other od #1  
11 new student od #2  
12 new student od #3  
13 HU 1st Notice (gen)  
14 HU 1st Notice (F/S)  
15 HU 2Hr Reserve O/D  
16 HU 1st Reserves O/D  
17 HU Replacement Bill  
18 HU Recall (gen)  
19 HU Recall (F/S)  
20 HU Bill Adjustment  
21 HU 2nd Notice (gen)  
22 HU 2nd Notice (F/S)  
23 drop hold-reserve  
24 drop hold-lost  
25 HU O/D Recall1 (gen)  
26 HU O/D Recall1 (F/S)  
27 HU O/D Recall2 (gen)  
28 HU O/D Recall2 (F/S)  
29 HU-RC Pageslip/Hold  
30 HU-RC Manual Charge  
31 HU 2nd Reserves O/D  
32 HU-RC Fines (others)  
33 drop hold-no reason  
34 drop hold-local aval  
35 HU Media O/D 1 (gen)  
36 HU Media O/D 2 (gen)

# Policy in Configuration

- Loan periods (56 to 120 days)
- Renewals (8 to 1)
- Fines
  - Overdue ( $\emptyset$ )
  - Reserves/Recall/Replacement (normalized w/partner)
- Notices
  - Overdue (increased number, frequency)
  - Statements (new)
- Automatic Recalls (new)



Source: Spook Central, [The Ghostbusters Companion](#). Paul Rudoff, 2017.

September 2016

Photo by David Maxson

Your connection to the Wyndham Robertson Library

## **NEW: EXTENDED CHECKOUT PERIODS, NO LATE FINES**

Here's a familiar scenario: you start a project early and checkout books from the library – your project isn't due for 6 weeks, but your checkout period is only 4 weeks. What do you do? Many times the answer is that you keep the books and suffer the late fines. We want to change that. **Beginning this fall, all students will be able to check out books for 120 days and will no longer be charged for late returns.**

# Library *news*

# GOT LATE FINES?

# NOT ANYMORE!

*We're going*  
**FINE FREE**  
*and your late fines have*  
**VANISHED**

ASK ABOUT IT AT THE CIRCULATION DESK  
OR READ OUR FAQ FOR DETAILS



Source: [liftyoursole.com](https://liftyoursole.com)



“In short, there were no negative impacts on the collection, we saved hours of staff time, and patrons responded very well to the entire process.”

- Boyce, College of William & Mary, 2014

“The removal of fines had no significant effect on borrower return rates and circulation numbers, but did win significant goodwill among users.”

- Reed, Blackburn & Sifton, Vancouver Island University, 2014

# In a Perfect World:



Trinity College, Dublin. Credit: [Travelandleisure.com](https://www.travelandleisure.com), 2014

# Loans & Fines

- Loan length
- Days before return
- Overdues
- Replacement/Lost/  
Billed
- Fines
- Invoices
- Amounts/Transactions  
Reversed

*Applied to each loan type, patron group, and counted by percentage of total.*

# Processes & People Affected

- Recalls
- ILL
- Patrons Blocked
- Staff Time Spent



# How to go fine-free

- Research - you are welcome to make use of our libguide:  
[libguides.hollins.edu/finefree](https://libguides.hollins.edu/finefree)
- Put forth your proposal
- Planning
- Implementation
- Assessment



“This is beyond exciting! What a fabulous improvement! This will definitely help students during research! Please pass this along to whomever worked on this progress!” - Student

“This is such a great idea! Well done! .... Very on point with the mission. I hope it works out!” - Staff

“This is exciting! I am consistently impressed with how the library engages with the student body on campus. Y’all are fabulous.” - Staff



Thank you! May we take your questions?

More information at:

<http://libguides.hollins.edu/finefree>

## User-centered access: planning and implementing a fine-free policy. ASC 2017 Presentation

 

Our library's proposal to extend lending and eliminate overdue fines has been implemented successfully! We'll share why and how we managed to align our circulation policies with the needs of our most frequent users. By Maryke Barber and Karen Ryan, Hollin

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Proposal (for Administration, Partner Library, etc.)

-  [Removing Barriers to Access Proposal](#)

### F.A.Q.

Wyndham Robertson Library proposed going fine free in the Fall of 2015. Planning ensued Spring 2016, together with our ILS partners at Roanoke College. We implemented a new borrowing policy extending loans and eliminating daily overdue fines in the summer of 2016. Read more [in our FAQ](#).

### Articles

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